

becoming the planet Venus. This is not wholly counter to the view of Vsekhviatsky that the normal lifetime of a comet is of the order of seventy years. On the other hand, Vorontzoff-Velyaminoff has estimated that Halley's comet in mass was 10^{19} grams, or about 100 million times less than the mass of the earth, a theory that makes it difficult to believe that any comet could have become the great big planet Venus.

Students of beginning Astronomy and public library addicts alike all over the country are having a field day finding references to Venus' existence a good while previous to 1500 B.C., at which time V-1 says she was formed.

Anybody can get in the Velikovsky-Vsekhviatsky-Vorontzoff-Velyaminoff debate.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

NOTICE is hereby given to all Corporate Members that the Council approved the applications of the persons listed below for MEMBERSHIP in the California Academy of Sciences. If no objections to the election of these applicants be received at the office of the Academy within two weeks after April 21, they will be considered elected.

FOR REGULAR MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. Theodore Aarons
Dr. C. L. Abbott
Mrs. Frieda Abernathy
Dr. Robert C. Ashley
Mr. John E. Baron
Dr. Franz Baumann
Dr. Marie Behm
Dr. H. M. Blackfield
Mr. David R. Brower
Dr. Walter L. Byers
Mrs. Ann Chase
Mr. Richard H. Creel
Mr. Raymond Dasmann
Dr. Justin R. Dorgeloh
Mr. Ed. V. Dwyer
Mr. Evan C. Evans, III
Mr. Rudolph Fischer
Dr. C. H. Francis
Dr. Paul G. Fuerstner
Dr. Lee Fulton
Captain Stephen A. Gajan
Dr. Hugh W. Garol
Dr. Frank Gerbode
Dr. Thomas E. Gibson
Dr. R. V. Harr
Mrs. Arthur W. Hartt
Mrs. Ralph V. Higgins
Mr. Thomas Large
Mr. Richard M. Leonard
Mr. A. I. Levorsen
Mr. Walter Scott Malloch
Mr. Lionel S. Mawby
Mrs. M. Hall McAllister
Dr. Oscar O. T. McAllister
Dr. George E. Nesche
Dr. Harlan Page
Miss Mary L. Perry
Dr. Rawson J. Pickard

Mr. John T. Piggott
Dr. Theodore S. Poulsen
The Hon. Elmer E. Robinson
Dr. Paul B. Roen
Dr. Raymond R. Ross
Mr. Ferdinand S. Ruth
Mrs. Edith M. Rutledge
Mr. Vincent Ryan
Dr. William W. Saunders
Mr. Page Schorer
Mr. Roger G. Simpson
Col. Waddell J. Smith
Mr. Walter A. Starr
Dr. Jerome C. Strain
Mr. Lowell Sumner
Dr. A. C. Thompson
Dr. Floyd F. Thompson
Dr. D. D. Todorovic
Dr. P. J. Vogel
The Hon. Earl Warren
Dr. Donald G. Watts
Lt. Col. Lawrence C. Wheeting
Mr. George E. Wilcox, Jr.

FOR STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Daniel Barter
Robert A. Booth
James Court
Mary Grigarick
James Hall
Kay Harrington
Merritt Herring
Richard House
Robert Johnson
Robert Kerley
Katherine Lyser
Ruthmary Savidge
Charlotte Woods
Robert Wright

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OWLS OR PHOENIXES?

(See page 2)

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April Announcement

THE APRIL MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held in North American Hall, West Wing of the Academy buildings in Golden Gate Park, Friday evening April 28, 1950 at 8 o'clock. The program, one of the Walter B. Scaife Foundation series, will be an all-color film, entitled

FROM COAST TO CREST

Alexander Sprunt, Jr., of the National Audubon Screen Tours and former curator of ornithology in the Museum of Charleston, South Carolina, will show pictures that combine some of the most skilful bird and scenic photography ever taken, augmented with a touch of flower, mammal, and insect material as well.

The film has a variety of scenes on the Gulf Coast of Texas in the wild life sanctuaries of the National Audubon Society, other Southwest scenes, and some desert shots of the Navajo Indians. The Grand Canyon and Monument Valley are both included in the "tour."

Through Colorado's Mesa Verde with its cliff palaces to Wyoming's Grand Tetons the trip from coast to crest continues, to end at Yellowstone. Along the Lewis River are found moose and their calves and black bears. At Yellowstone Lake yarrowes are in bloom, fishermen line up on the famous Fishing Bridge, and mud geysers boil and bubble. In rapid succession: Canyon Village, dusk at Inspiration Point; an osprey winging over Yellowstone Falls; the grizzly bear; Artist Point; Tower Falls; and buffalo at Riverside Geyser.

The Sprunt lecture will bring the beauties of the West to the screen along with the photographer-lecturer's knowledge of natural history and conservation problems. The public is cordially invited.

OUT OF THE FLAMES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 1906 is observed as an anniversary and in respectful retrospect at the California Academy of Sciences. The Academy fared less well that day than did one of its neighbors, the Emporium, which staunchly withstood the shock and flames that destroyed our six-story building on Market Street.

Besides losing a museum with collections built up through half a century, the California Academy of Sciences lost its important library. Only two books were saved. The monumental collection of pre-Linnaean works, said to have been the greatest in North America, was burned as were the many complete sets of scientific journals accumulated between the Academy's founding in 1853 and the time of the Fire.

With forethought and bravery, first on the scene was Miss Alice Eastwood. Her gallant rescue of herbarium types and Academy records is well known. The two books which were saved had been tossed from the balcony by Academy Director Leverett M. Loomis. Both folio sized, one was a copy of Captain Thomas Brown's

Illustrations of the American Ornithology of Alexander Wilson and Charles Lucien Bonaparte. The 1835 Edinburgh edition with hand-tinted plates even then was rare. In 1903, *Auk* had reported only three other known copies. The second book saved was Fayrer's *Venomous Snakes of the Indian Peninsula* (1874). The big volumes were loaded on the spring wagon that Miss Eastwood had commandeered to take Academy records and possessions to safety. The engraving of the five owls, shown on the News Letter cover, is from one of the two surviving books, the *Wilson and Bonaparte Ornithology*.

Not only did these owls and their associated feathered friends survive the San Francisco Fire but out of those ashes was hatched a second bird, traditionally a Phoenix, in the form of another Library for the Academy.

Americans all over the country responded generously with relief of every kind for San Francisco. The plight of the Academy received immediate and widespread attention. The Philadelphia Academy of Sciences held an emergency meeting and shipped copies of all their publications and of all other works their library had in duplicate, some 1,800 volumes. Important gifts were likewise received from the Academy at St. Louis, the British Museum, and the Boston Society of Natural History. Trustees, members, and friends sent hundreds of volumes from their private libraries.

Since that time the Academy Library has been further enriched by such personal collections and libraries as those of C. E. Grunsky, George Davidson, Joseph and John Ward Mailliard, William Hammond Hall, Alice Eastwood, and Edwin C. Van Dyke. For all its inconvenient housing and inadequate staff, the Academy Library today is one of the noted scientific collections in the West. Of the present 100,000 volumes and 60,000 maps, Academy Librarian Veronica Sexton can point to a surprising number that are as valuable and rare as the *Ornithology* and the *Snake works* that were seedlings to a second Library for the Academy.

BOUTONNIERE FOR BOTANY

AN HERBARIUM is being established in Copenhagen through efforts of the home office of the East Asiatic Company which has a San Francisco branch. From various parts of the world the company has requested specimens of leaves and seeds of indigenous trees. From the California Academy of Science's herbarium have gone specimens of Douglas fir, *Pseudotsuga taxifolia*, and redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, which the company requested and two other species from this area, the California bay, *Umbellularia californica*, and the madroño, *Arbutus Menziesii*. This small coöperative gesture from our Botany Department is a "service we like to perform," says Curator J. T. Howell, with becoming modesty.

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MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY who have been reading magazine and newspaper accounts of a startling new book *Worlds in Collision* by Immanuel Velikovsky may desire to know the opinions expressed by competent scientists.

Dr. Harlow Shapley of Harvard University has called it "rubbish and nonsense." Dr. Robert C. Miller, the Academy's Director, in a vigorous editorial in the March-April issue of *Pacific Discovery*, refers to Velikovsky's claims as "twaddle."

Velikovsky thinks that about 1500 B.C. a comet passed close to the earth, causing it to pause in its rotation and the sun to stand still (Joshua, 10:12-13), the comet later